

LETTERS

FROM

ELIZA TO YORICK.



LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THE EDITOR,
AND

Entered in the Hall-Book of the Company of
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P R E F A C E.

TH E editor of the elegant and
pathetic letters, from YOR-
ICK to ELIZA, which have
lately made their appearance in the
world, says, “ It is very much to
“ be lamented, that Eliza’s mo-
“ desty was invincible to all the
“ pub-

“ publisher’s endeavours to obtain
 “ her answers to these letters.

“ Her wit, penetration, and judg-
 “ ment ; her happiness in the epif-
 “ tolarly style, so rapturously com-
 “ mended by Mr. Sterne, could
 “ not fail to furnish a rich enter-
 “ tainment for the public — the
 “ publisher could not help telling
 “ her, that he wished to God, she
 “ really was possessed of that vani-
 “ ty with which she was charg-
 “ ed.”

We

We should as sincerely lament Eliza's invincible modesty, as the editor of those letters, if we thought her sensibility, in that respect, would preclude the publication of such valuable compositions; or if we imagined that her too scrupulous partiality for her particular friends, or in the most enlarged idea, the circle of her acquaintance, ought in justice to impede the more general gratification of that PUBLIC, who by means of YORICK's letters, addressed to her, must of course become her admirers.

Nor ought Eliza to blame us—
the delicate mind is frequently too
severe to itself, and abridges its
own merit of that fame, which is
justly its due.

It is therefore incumbent on the
friends of such a being, to break
through such partial restrictions,
and disobey those orders, which are
only the effects of a too timorous
sensibility.

To disobey the self-denying ri-
gor of such commands, to put a
negative on such *bashful delicacy*, if

I may be allowed the expression, is not only friendly, but even meritorious.

Real merit is always modest, it seeks solitude, would pine in secret, and sink unnoticed into oblivion.

Then surely that person is deserving of applause, or at least the thanks of the public, who draws it from its retirement, brings it to the light for public benefit, and places it in that point of view in which it ought to be conspicuously
seen

seen, and to shine for general imitation, and improvement.

Eliza's only objection to the publication of her letters, was, That she thought, " Although
" Mr. Sterne was partial to every
" thing of her's, she could not
" hope that the world would be so
" too."

But we will venture to affirm, that the world will not think this argument ought to be deemed sufficiently strong, to deprive them of such a valuable entertainment :

For

For the excellency of the epistles themselves, and the great deference which should be paid to the judgment of Mr. Sterne, are reasons more than sufficient to overturn the objection——And that once fallen, not a syllable can be justly advanced against this publication.

For a character of Eliza's letters, take Mr. Sterne's own words,

“ Who taught you the art of
“ writing so sweetly, Eliza? —

You

“ You absolutely have exalted it
“ to a science.

“ When I am in want of ready
“ cash, and ill health will permit
“ my genius to exert itself, I
“ shall print your letters, as *finish-*
“ *ed Essays*, by an *unfortunate*
“ *Indian Lady.*”

“ The style is new, and would
“ almost be a sufficient recommen-
“ dation, for their selling well,
“ without merit :

But

“ But their sense, natural ease,
 “ and spirit, are not to be equal-
 “ led, I believe, in this section of
 “ the globe—nor I will answer for
 “ it, by any of your country-women
 “ in your’s.”

Then what a crime would the
 possessor of such literary jewels,
 such a mental treasure, have been
 guilty of, in secluding it from the
 public, and, like the miser, lock-
 ing that from the light, which ge-
 nerously diffused, must be pleasing
 and useful to all.

Nothing but her native diffidence could have induced Eliza to have entertained the least idea of being so unkind, or of wishing her friends to be so selfish.

The curiosity of the public is raised by the publication of Yorick's letters —— it ought to be gratified with the counterpart.

Nay, the lady's *fame* is concerned——it is necessary that her answers should be published——it is necessary to secure her reputation from the smallest shadow of cen-
sure

ture, to evince before the face of the world, that her ideas were not less pure than her *Bramin's*.

The publication of the following letters will prove, that her expressions, tho' as animated, were no less scrupulously delicate than her *Yoricks* :

And likewise, that Platonism, so much ridiculed, so long thought a chimera, may exist, and even with the strongest sensibility, and warmest imagination.

Though Eliza was too diffident of her abilities, or nice in her ideas, to oblige the public with her letters to Yorick, yet she indulged many of her friends with copies of them — these again gratified many within the circle of their acquaintance with the same favor.

And thus they, in fact, became published; unless the word signifies, nothing without being applied to what issues from the press only.

Thus

Thus we can only claim the merit of giving a more fair, convenient, and general edition of these elegant epistles, of which we received correct copies from a lady, not more dignified by her rank in life, than elevated by her understanding.

She gave us leave, if we thought proper, to use her name—but we declined it, thinking the letters sufficient to recommend themselves, and the best testimonies in their own favor :

Agreeable

Agreeable to Mr. Sterne's opinion, concerning Eliza's picture,

" I requested (says he) that you
 " would come simple and unadorn-
 " ed, when you sat for me, know-
 " ing, as I see with unprejudiced
 " eyes, that you could receive no
 " addition from the silk-worm's
 " aid, or jeweller's polish."

Thus

Thus we send Eliza's answers to Yorick's epistles into the world, without any recommendation, except their own intrinsic merit.

LETTERS



[17]

L E T T E R S

F R O M

E L I Z A to Y O R I C K.

MY BRAMIN,

I RECEIVED your Sentimental Journey—your imagination hath strange powers—it has awakened feelings in my heart, which I never knew I possessed—You make me vain—you make me in love with my own sensibility—

I bedewed your pathetic pages with tears—but they were tears of pleasure—my heart flowed through my eyes—every particle of tenderness in my whole frame was awakened.—

C

You

You take the surest method to improve the understanding—you convince the reason, by touching the soul.—

Sure the greatest compliments an author can receive, are the sighs and tears of his readers—such sincere applause I amply gave you.

I beg, if you value me, that you will not flatter me—I am already too vain—and praise from a man of sense is dangerous.

I am in the utmost extent of the word,
your

Cordial friend,



E L I Z A.

MY BRAMIN,

IT is with pleasure I inform you, that I am better—because I believe it will give you pleasure.

You tell me, “ A friend has the same right as a physician.”

Then you may claim a double right—you are my friend, and physician, the most valuable of physicians, the physician of my mind—come then, and bring the best of cordials—the cordial of sentiment—if thy conversation does not eradicate my disorder entirely—it will make me forget that I am ill—I shall feel no pain while you are present.

[20]

To wish to see you—you find is the interest,
as well as desire of,

Ten o'clock.

E L I Z A.

KIND

KIND YORICK,

I PERUSED your epistle, as I always do, with infinite pleasure — I am charmed with your account of that worthy nobleman, lord Bathurst — half a score of such as him would make old age amiable, redeem it from the character of morosiness, and render it the most desirable period of life.

The company his lordship has kept, and the friendships he has courted, sufficiently evidence his understanding—the manner of his introducing himself to you, at the Princess of Wales's Court, is enough to render his name respectable. —

I am obliged to his lordship for his good opinion of me, though I only shone like the moon with borrowed light—I cannot merit his encomiums—they are not due to myself; but to my picture, as drawn by your brilliant imagination—your kind fancy was the sun, that gave me the light, which his lordship admired. —

You speak with seraphic truth, when you say, heaven gives us strength, proportioned to the weight it lays upon us—I have experienced it—for I found fortitude encrease with my illness—and as my health decayed, my dependance upon providence grew stronger. —

But I am better—thank heaven—you bid me hope every thing—I do—hope
is

is the balm of my soul, the kind soother of my anguish upon all occasions.—

The time approaches for my departure from England—I could wish you to be of the voyage—your conversation would shorten the tedious hours, and smooth the rugged bosom of the deep. I should find no terrors from the wavering elements, nor dread the dangers that surrounded my floating prison.—

Yet why should I wish to call you from your peaceful retirement, and domestic happiness—to trust the precarious elements, and seek an inclement sky—cruel thought Eliza, be content to bear thy Yorick's image in thy mind—and to treasure his instructions in thy heart—then thou wilt be properly sustained against the changes of torture, and dangers of the deep—then thou wilt be in the true sense of the expression, Yorick' ELIZA—.

KIND YORICK.

MY nerves are so weak, and my hand trembles so much, that I am afraid this scrawl will hardly be intelligible—I am extremely ill—indeed I am.——

I am obliged to exert myself to write this—present my kind respects to Mr. and Mrs. James—they are in my heart—they occupy a share of my cordial friendship, with my Bramin—may heaven preserve you all from experiencing the anguish my poor weak being is oppressed with.——

But think not Yorick that I complain—
no—

Boun-

Bountiful heaven, I thank thee for my afflictions—thou chastisest me for my good—my poor vain heart had wandered from the thoughts of futurity—thou hast brought it back, and fixed its attention to the point where it ought to dwell—O keep me from the sin of repining, and give me strength to bear my afflictions with patience.

The family of the * * * s have been with me—they are truly amiable beings—I admire them greatly—they were extremely afflicted at my situation—I believe they felt for me—I am sure they regard me.

I am taken with a strange dizziness—I can say no more, adieu.

E L I Z A.

D

My

MY BRAMIN,

I FIND myself rather better to-day,
my head is easier.

Accept my grateful thanks — make them acceptable to Mr. and Mrs. James — for the concern you have all had upon my account — my overflowing heart thanks ye — though my expressions are too weak to describe its feelings.

You have certainly been misinformed — I cannot think the * * * family really merit the asperity with which you mention it — I cannot think ill of any being, without having had some occasion — I would not wish to live a slave to suspicion — that were to be miserable indeed — I am sensible, my Bramin would not
con-

conceive a hard opinion of any one, without some grounds—but he may have been deceived—his good heart may have been too open to the designing—and the
 * * * s misrepresented.

I must be exceedingly troublesome to you—I want your assistance to execute a few commissions—excuse your Eliza—she cannot take that freedom—she cannot trust any person else.

I must intreat, that you would procure directions from Mr. Zumpe, in what manner I am to time my pianoforte—as I design it to be my harmonious companion, during the voyage.

I should be glad of about a dozen brass screws, to put up in my cabin, as conveniences to hang any thing upon.

D 2

I 2

I must have a proper journal book, to amuse myself, in minuting the particulars of my voyage.

An arm chair will likewise be useful to me.

Be kind enough to send any parcel for me to the address of Mr. Abraham Walker, pilot at Deal.

Though my health improves, I am not intirely at ease in my mind—but let me not give pain to the heart that feels too much for me.

My warmest affections to Mrs. James, —she is a dear creature—my respects to Mr. James—heaven bless them both—may the smiles of health and prosperity attend them.

God

God is my eternal friend, to him I look for protection, and while I breathe the air of mortality, my regards are on you—you are my adviser—my monitor—my better genius—may our reciprocal affections continue pure and unchanged, till the dissolution of our frail beings—and if an intercourse is allowed between the spirits of the departed, may we enjoy that exalted—that refined, ethereal rapture—which the ardent seraphims know, while glowing with the emanations of their eternal Creator.

Mayest thou enjoy uninterrupted happiness, till the angel of death wings thee to the regions of bliss,

Adieu,

E L I Z A.

Dear

Dear BRAMIN,

THIS is my birth day—I am twenty-five years of age—yet years, when past, seem but as so many hours—the moments of anguish are the only portions of time, which we can count—we feel their weight—they pass tediously by—we blame them for being tardy, tho' their speed continually takes from the space of our existence—But how fleeting are the moments in which we enjoy ourselves — they steal unperceived away, and all our pleasures are but short-lived dreams.

To the mind debased by vice, or clouded by doubts, how dreadful must
the

the rapidity of time appear—when every minute takes from their much-loved existence, and leads them to be

“ They know not what, they know not
 “ where—or what is worse, sinks them
 “ into nothing ! Yet even that nothing
 “ appears terrible.” Such is the Sceptic’s
 situation.

But to a soul fond of virtue, and secured by faith, time’s swift wings give not a moment’s anguish—The good wish to get rid of the incumbrance of clay, and the pains of mortality, they pant for a dissolution—time seems an enemy, who bars their speedy passage to that desirable felicity, which is only to be found in the regions of *bliss*.

The

The time I have past is nothing—it is now not mine—it is but a blank just stamped upon the memory.

Then let me prize what yet remains behind—let me learn foresight from past miscarriages, and rise to future virtues from former follies—may each revolving sun see me encrease in wisdom, and shine on ripening virtues, till I am fitted for that state which is all purity.

I bow before my afflictions with resignation, and thank the bountiful Author of nature, for sending me such useful monitors.

“ Virtue rejoice, tho’ heaven may frown
 (awhile,
 That frown is but an earnest of a smile ;
 One

One day of tears presages years of joy,
Misfortunes only mend us, not destroy;
Who feel the lashes of an adverse hour,
Find them but means to waft them into
(pow'r."

May heaven bless my friends and ene-
mies, and give me peace of mind.

ELIZA

✂ The above letter was either never an-
swered, or the answer is lost.

E

Let

LET me see your journal, at least send a copy of it, before I leave England—for far, far off be the time destined for its descending to me as a legacy—I shall be happy to peruse the sorrowful pages, they humanize the heart—I feel as you felt, when I read what you pen—and that is to feel with the most refined sensibility.

The sympathy of Sentiments bestows the most inexpressible pleasures — such sorrows are sorrows to be covered—when your page compels the tears from my eyes, and makes my heart throb—I will say, Here my Bramin wept—when the penn'd this passage, he wept—let me catch the pleasing contagion from each heart.

heart-felt sentence, and bedew the leaf with mutual streaming sorrows.—

—Then will I turn to the chearful effusions of thy imagination—then will I revel in the bright sallies of thy wit, and calm the pathetic perturbations of my soul with thy inimitable humour—the big tear shall no longer tremble in my eye—the tender anguish shall no longer heave my heart, but Yorick shall heal the sorrows the Bramin gave.

Such delectable amusements shall gild the tedious hours of my passage—and by Yorick's assistance, I shall fancy India but half the distance from England that it really is.

A kindly something you promise, by every post—then be assured I shall never

wave my hand to stop the silent messenger, but with open arms receive it.

I am considerably better ; and, thank heaven, am inspired with a fortitude, which I hope renders me worthy of the name of your disciple, of your friend.

My accomodations are tolerable — I cannot complain.

You say you shall see me at Deal with the Jamess, should I be detained there by contrary winds.

It has been my Petition, ever since to the supreme Being, to interest the elements in my behalf, that I may once more be indulged with the sight of my friends.

Thus

Thus while the captain, the crew, and the other passengers, are wishing for a favourable gale, I am importuning the heavens to deny their prayer, and still to detain the vessel from her proceeding on her destined voyage.

I will not give my opinion concerning my resemblance on canvas, in the various styles, desired by my friends — I sat to oblige them—and would not on any account obtrude a dissenting stricture on their judgment.

But of this they may rest assured, that however the pictures may appear, the original is their's.

You say, when you first saw me, the mode of my dress (the fashionable) disfigured me. I

I thought so myself—but wore it in compliance with the reigning taste — there is no pride so strong as that which is couched under an affected singularity.

Above all things, I would not wish to appear singular; that is, to be essentially absurd.

When I consider the distinguished friendship, with which you honour me, and reflect on that purity of affection which hath interested you in my most trivial concerns, and engaged you to devote your precious moments to my service—I cannot but glory in the compliment you pay me—in saying, “ You
“ are not handsome Eliza—nor is yours
“ a face that will please a tenth part of
“ your beholders.”

How

How happy am I not to owe your attachment to frail and fading beauty—but to sentiment alone.

The compliment is the strongest I ever in my life received, or wish to receive—it is not composed of common place flattery, nor paid to the simple features of a face—it is genuine applause—it is paid to the head—to the heart.

Yet I must not indulge any vanity, so far as to take it in its full force to myself—you rather draw me as you are prejudiced in my favour, and partial to my defects.

Yet will I often look on my picture as finished by your hand—I am persuaded it is what I ought to be—I will strive to come up to the colouring, in order to be

as

as perfect as my nature will admit, or perhaps as Providence designed I should be, during this sublunary probation.

You mention my husband, that dear name has made the tide of my blood ebb tumultuously towards my heart—I turn my imagination towards India—sigh at the distance, and could almost unsay all that I have said in the former part of my letter.

But why should I revoke a single sentence, or wish to recall one sentiment—are not love and friendship equally sacred—then learn, Eliza, to keep them both inviolate—to be worthy of such a husband—such a friend!

Yes, my Yorick, my husband could grant thee my company—if it could be
of

